



# Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies

Institut du Caire pour les études des droits de l'Homme  
مركز القاهرة لدراسات حقوق الإنسان

## **United Nations Human Rights Council: 61st Session**

Closing session: Joint statement

8 July 2026

Delivered by: Salma El Hosseiny

We welcome initiatives to mark the Council's 20th anniversary, and its significant contributions to developing international law, prevention, and promoting accountability for atrocity crimes and other grave violations, promoting cooperation and dialogue inclusive of civil society and victims, and providing support to all States to implement human rights on the ground. In order to be successful, the Council requires the active, safe and unhindered participation of civil society of all generations, free from intimidation and reprisals, including through the reinstatement of hybrid modalities. It also requires the meaningful and constructive cooperation by States with the Council and its mechanisms, including the UPR.

The liquidity crisis and budget cuts represent a major challenge for the Council to fully deliver on mandates agreed by Member States. To do so, all States should support adequate, predictable, increased and sustainable funding to the UN's human rights pillar as a whole. In this sense, we strongly welcome the recent decision by the General Assembly Fifth Committee to suspend the return of cash that is unspent - mainly due to late payments by Member States. While alleviating the impact of the liquidity crisis, this decision does not exempt States from their obligation to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time, including the United States and China.

We welcome the adoption of the resolution on women and girls in humanitarian settings, the first UN resolution to explicitly mention reproductive violence, acknowledging the gravity of these acts or omissions aimed at harming one's reproductive autonomy and we further welcome that the resolution has acknowledged that this form of violence can constitute genocidal acts, such as attempts to destroy a group.

We welcome that the resolution on discrimination against women and girls focused on care and support systems, referencing the structural causes of discrimination against women and girls in this setting, including restrictions to the right to bodily autonomy as well as discriminatory stereotypes about what is deemed "women's work." We are particularly supportive of the resolution's recognition that the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work limits women's and girls' opportunities, access to education, decent work, health and participation in public life, and its call on States to transform care systems through concrete legislative, fiscal and policy measures.

We welcome that resolution on child, early and forced marriage focuses on implementation of recent OHCHR guidelines. This grounds the issue in implementation and results, and provides a clear link between the resolutions adopted by the Council and the positive tangible change that they can have on people's lives.

We welcome the adoption of the resolution on human rights and climate change with a focus on adaptation and future generations. We welcome that this resolution continues advancing the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment by having a reference to the ICJ's Advisory Opinion on Climate Change which follows the most recent General Assembly's resolution welcoming this ruling with an overwhelming majority. We also welcome that the resolution recognises the importance of adaptation measures as a significant step to avert, minimise and address loss and damage from the adverse impacts of climate change. We also welcome that this resolution recognises that climate change poses severe threats to present and future generations. While stronger wording could have been included, this is an important step to recognise the impacts of climate change on future generations. We regret that this resolution, once again, fails to explicitly state that fossil fuels are the root cause of climate change and that States have obligations to transition away from them. We remind States that if the HRC is to take effective action against climate change, it is time that this resolution acknowledges that fossil fuels are the main driver of climate change and the other planetary crises, as repeatedly stated by independent science, the [UN Secretary General](#), the [High Commissioner for Human Rights](#), and several [Special Rapporteurs](#). As stated in the ICJ Advisory Opinion, failure to take adequate action, in line with the best available science, may constitute an internationally wrongful act which could be attributable to the States. We also regret that, notwithstanding the support expressed by numerous delegations, this resolution continues to be silent in recognising the positive, important, legitimate and vital role that environmental human rights defenders (EHRDs) play in the promotion and protection of human rights and the environment, particularly in the context of climate change. As recognised by the HRC [resolution 40/11](#), EHRDs are one of the most exposed and at risk around the world. We also regret that the resolution does not include language on ensuring access to information and safe, meaningful and inclusive participation in decision-making processes for EHRDs as fundamental pillars for climate justice.

In a context in which cases of criminalisation, attacks, judicial harassment (including strategic lawsuits against public participation), and intimidations against those raising concerns about business activities continue, we welcome the renewal of the mandate of the Working Group on Business and Human Rights. The WG has been essential for human rights defenders, communities, Indigenous Peoples and other actors to guarantee that businesses are accountable for their human rights abuses; including through the development and strengthening the normative framework to advance corporate accountability. We also call on States to consider using the [Guidance on the right of Indigenous Peoples to free, prior and informed consent in the context of business activities](#) presented during this session.

We welcome the progress made in the resolution on freedom of opinion and expression, a foundational right which enables the enjoyment of all other human rights. In particular, we welcome that the resolution builds on the momentum of recent resolutions by including enhanced language on the impacts of transnational repression and by mandating a comprehensive study on transnational threats to the right to freedom of opinion and expression. We welcome new language on an array of other key issues, including strategic lawsuits against public participation, decriminalisation of defamation, surveillance, artificial intelligence, and internet shutdowns and restrictions. We also commend the

consistent, strong gender approach in the resolution, including the new language on tech-facilitated gender-based violence.

We welcome the adoption of the resolution on the independence and impartiality of the judiciary, jurors and assessors, and the independence of lawyers: mandate of Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers. We welcome the inclusion of new language, including: condemning the increasingly frequent attacks on the independence of judges, lawyers, prosecutors and court officials, including those serving in international courts; Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation (SLAPP), as well as cross-border attacks. We also welcome language on the need to protect lawyer-client confidentiality from undue interference, including surveillance; attacks against lawyers outside their borders; a reference to the adoption of the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer; as well as a standalone paragraph on the importance of complying with international standards in judicial appointments and judicial selection processes and criteria.

We welcome the report of the Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity (IESOGI) on lesbian, bisexual, and queer (LBQ) women, which marks a historic milestone. LBQ women face distinct, intersecting violations—including targeted gender-based violence and systemic exclusion—that often fall between the cracks of traditional human rights frameworks. This report bridges a critical protection gap and gives long-overdue institutional visibility to their experiences. We urge all Member States to implement its targeted recommendations.

We mark the conclusion of the mandate of Special Rapporteur Dr Tlaleng Mofokeng. We express our profound gratitude to Dr Mofokeng for her tireless dedication and rigorous, independent advocacy. Her work has been instrumental in advancing rights-based healthcare globally, especially for underrepresented and marginalised communities. We extend our sincere appreciation to the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights for her powerful remarks on women and girls in sport. We echo her emphasis on dismantling structural barriers and ensuring safe, inclusive, and equitable sporting environments for all, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics.

We regret the absence of the biannual resolution to promote and protect human rights in the context of peaceful protests. We look forward to its presentation to the Human Rights Council in 2027.

We welcome the adoption of a resolution on Eritrea, which extends the [mandate](#) of the Special Rapporteur on the country and reaffirms the need for continued scrutiny of one of Africa's most repressive states. As the Council turns 20, Eritrea remains among the very few UN member states that have never received a single visit by a special procedure — an attitude of non-cooperation mirrored at the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). While a majority of States [recognised](#) that without any concrete reforms or progress, and in the absence of political will to uphold the rights of Eritreans, monitoring and pressure remain indispensable, we regret that States did not aim to ensure meaningful follow-up to the Commission of Inquiry's (COI) findings of "crimes against humanity," ten years ago. Ten years on, [accountability](#) remains elusive. We thank the outgoing Special Rapporteur, Dr. Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker, for his principled and tireless work in support of the Eritrean people's rights and dignity.

We welcome the adoption of the resolution on the Rohingya and other minorities in Myanmar. It is an important step towards ensuring the dire situation of the Rohingya, who once again face an existential threat amid escalating violence and deepening humanitarian crisis, remains on the global agenda. Over 200,000 Rohingya have crossed into Bangladesh amid the ongoing conflict, adding to the more than one million refugees already living in camps in Cox's Bazar. 2025 has also become the deadliest year on record for Rohingya at sea, as more flee violence and desperation in the camps. We welcome that the resolution rightly names responsible parties, including the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army, and calls for accountability. However, we regret its silence on a key measure needed to end the violence - an arms embargo on Myanmar. States must ensure Rohingya in Myanmar and in Bangladesh's camps receive adequate humanitarian aid through sustained funding, and ensure accountability for genocide and other gross violations and abuses against Rohingya.

In the face of an imminent ground offensive by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and risks of atrocity crimes, especially in light of the 2025 El Fasher massacre (which according to the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) bore “hallmarks of genocide”), the Council did the right thing by **holding** an urgent debate and adopting a **resolution** on the situation in El Obeid, Sudan, as **recommended** by civil society. However, States stopped short of a stronger response as they failed to explicitly condemn actors enabling atrocities in Sudan, including the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the most significant enabler of the RSF, which supports the paramilitary group through weapons, ammunition, military equipment, drones, armoured vehicles, **mercenaries**, and logistical and financial assistance. No one should get a free pass for their violations or crimes they enable or facilitate in Sudan, whether they support the RSF or the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF). External actors backing Sudan's warring parties **include** the UAE, Egypt, Iran, and a range of other State and non-state actors, including, among others, Haftar's Libyan National Army, Russia and its “Africa Corps,” Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Eritrea. There are differences in the scale, persistence and sophistication of their support, and in the extent to which they have continued to provide support to the warring parties despite knowledge and evidence of crimes under international law. The time for generic condemnations of “all forms of external interference that fuel the conflict” is over. The international community must now **name names**, and the Council should recommend that the General Assembly submit the FFM's reports to the Security Council and encourage the latter to expand the International Criminal Court's jurisdiction – currently limited to Darfur – to cover the entire territory of Sudan, while also ensuring that those responsible, including commanders, external enablers and arms suppliers, are identified and held accountable. The Human Rights Council **should not** simply react to one atrocity crisis after another but instead contribute to reprioritising Sudan – the world's largest displacement and humanitarian crisis – in all decision-making fora, with accountability as a centre of gravity.

Signatories:

1. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
2. Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)
3. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
4. Center for Reproductive Rights
5. CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation
6. Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)
7. Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)
8. FIDH
9. Gulf Centre for Human Rights

10. Hivos
11. Humanists International
12. International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
13. International, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA World)
14. Peace Brigades International
15. World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)